

THE LEWIS CARROLL SOCIETY

OF NORTH AMERICA



The first issue of every publication is launched with a combination of innocence, hope, daring and determination. To explain each of these sensations would take more space than this issue. Sufficient to say—we would like The Knight Letter to be an expression of our membership, since its purpose is to inform, and no editor has the capacity to know everything that's happening in the Carrollian world. What follows—and will follow, in future issues—is a compilation from many of our members, of events, transactions and reports that touch on our mutual interest.

□ The Princeton Alumni Weekly of May 28, 1974, thoughtfully sent to us by member Alexander Wainwright, contains the article Lewis Carroll, Photographer. In six pages, the author manages to tell us a great deal about the difficulties of early photography, and to include a number of photos taken by Carroll, all of which have been previously printed. The front cover of the publication is graced by the lovely profile photo of Alice Liddell that we know so well.

□ It is with profound regret that we note the passing of member Alfred Berol. Mr. Bérol, former head of the Eagle Pencil Company, was 81 when he died on June 14th. He had been an outstanding collector of books and manuscripts, and had donated letters by George Washington and John Jay to Columbia University, and one by Galileo to Harvard. He had an extensive Carroll collection, including the 1865 Alice, as well as one of the more important collections of Arthur Rackham. A trustee of Columbia University, he received an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from Westminster College.

□ Everyone knows Martin Gardner for his Annotated Alice, Snark, Casey at the Bat, as well as his science and puzzle books. What, regretfully, is less well known, is that Mr. Gardner has written a novel, The Flight of Peter Frorum. Martin Levin, in the New York Times, called it “a brilliantly illuminating metaphysical novel that employs ideas as adversaries and translates them into human dilemmas.” Other reviews were equally favorable. The book is published by William Kaufmann, Inc. of Los Altos, California.

□ From Alice Berkey: “Today, for my un-birthday, someone gave me a present that all of you would really love! At first glance it seems to be a basic rag-doll Alice, with blue embroidered eyes and yellow yarn hair. But if you lift her skirt over her head, surprise!—she ‘turns into’ a furry White Rabbit, upside-down. It’s an invention of Hill ‘n’ Hollow, Whitesburg, Kentucky 41860 ... From a shop called Cuckoobird, Peckham Bush, Tonbridge, England, another friend has sent me a charming little Alice-shaped sachet stuffed with lavender ... And here’s something you can get at your grocery store. Buy

4 packages of Jiffy-Pop Popcorn, and inside you'll find 4 different (or 4 identical, depending on your luck) Magic Picture Kits (i.e. decals) of Walt Disney's Wonderland. As for the popcorn—well, it's flavored with lipolyzed butterfat, which isn't the best butter, you know."

☐ From the Winter/Spring 1974 Catalog of Zita Books, Box 123, Ansonia Station, New York is the following listing of what we believe is a previously unrecorded Carroll item:“(Carroll, Lewis) (Scudder, H.) Fellow, R. The Game of Croquet, Its Appointment and Laws. New Edition enlarged and corrected. 12mo 48P. Pict paper wrps. Front by Hoppin, text figures. N.Y. Hurd and Houghton 1868. This is Scudder's first book but a later issue. This issue contains as well, for the first time on P. 43-48 “The Game of Castle Croquet.” Invented by Lewis Carroll ...”

☐ Professor Morton Cohen, who delivered such an absorbing address at our first meeting, is now in England finishing up his work on the Lewis Carroll letters. As usual, he is busy in other Carrollian matters, among which was a speech on “Lewis Carroll and the Pre-Raphaelites” at the William Morris Society, and an article in the London Times of July 20th, called “The Wonderful Day Gertrude Met the Snark.”

(Quotation: “Today's teenagers respond to Carroll's fantasies as keenly as their grandparents did a hundred years ago.”)

☐ Alice and Wonderland — A Rock Opera. Received by Byron Sewell:

Music: Wink Kelso

Lyrics and Stage Direction: Richard Rosen

Arrangements and Direction: Tito Villalobos Moreno

Alice: Karen Jones

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson: Wink Kelso

This rock opera played recently in the Alice and Wonderland Theatre in Houston, Texas and offers heavy Freudian interpretations to the sound of hard rock. The opera originally opened in the San Antonio Theater Club, Hemisfair Plaza, San Antonio, Texas and performed 36 weeks to 135 sold-out performances. The show then closed for rewriting and reopened in Houston. Plans have been made for a tour later this year, but I am unaware of the arrangements.

The basic theme of this rock opera is the conflicts experienced by Lewis Carroll, described as a “32-year-old virgin” and Alice Liddell, a child friend whom “he wanted to marry.” On that most shaky basis emerges the opera, and it is unfortunate that Mr. Rosen was unable to research his subject better before putting it into words and music. The opera was far more successful, in my opinion, when it stuck to traditional dialogue. There are superbly well written and sung performances of traditional scenes from the book, including “White Rabbit” and “Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum.” “Alice's Theme” is also a well written and enjoyable song.

The music is loud and rather traditional hard rock, and for those who enjoy just that, the music was fine. Mr. Rosen informed me that the music will appear later this year as an album.

Towards the end of the performance, Alice sings a recurrent theme in a song titled “Where Do I Go from Here?”, and the answer might well be that the play should go straight to any number of good biographies and The Diaries, to get things in a little better perspective.

☐ Noted in a recent catalogue: "Eva's Adventures in Shadow-Land. Illust. Phila: Lippincott, 1872. 1st edition of this early American imitation of Alice." (Editor's note: Does anyone know of an earlier one?)

☐ Helen Heinrich writes to tell us that she is planning a conference in children's literature, to be held in London next year. It will feature an Alice Tea Party, along with a Carroll exhibit and guest speakers. She also informs us that the University of Connecticut at Storrs has published Volume I and II of the Children's Literature Association Journal, which contain articles on Carroll ... The Diogenes Club Review, a publication emanating from Franklin Pierce College, Renage, New Hampshire features papers on Alice. Write to Ritchie Darling, Asst. Professor of English and enclose 10¢ for postage ... A poetry magazine called Jam Today is published at P.O. Box 249, Northfield, Vermont 05663 ... A notice about the Lewis Carroll Society will appear in the Professional Notes and Comment section of the October issue of PMLA ... An exhibit of fifteen Lewis Carroll photographs was shown recently at the Scott Elliot Gallery in New York.

☐ **TRADING POST** Dave Shaeffer is interested in obtaining translations of Alice in Arabic, Bulgarian, Esperanto, Finnish, Icelandic, Irish, Kanarese, Lithuanian and Ariya—for which he offers Alice translations in other languages.

☐ The Merrimack Publishing Corporation has been issuing reprints of Alice books, puzzles and card games. Their latest catalog features Alice greeting cards, porcelain figurines, dolls and brooches. The catalog is obtainable from the company at 85 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10003. Particularly interesting: a reprint of the Postage Stamp Case.

Finally, in closing, we would very much like to include a "Notes and Queries" section in the Knight Letter. Please send your queries to your grateful editor,

STAN MARX

